

# Mechanical Memories Magazine

ISSUE 50

NOV. 2010



*The only UK magazine for collectors of vintage coin-operated amusements*

# Mechanical Memories Magazine

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# Editorial

Hello, and welcome to the November magazine. It's been a struggle to get this one out, so please excuse any typo errors, because I haven't checked as thoroughly as I normally do. I was open at Brighton for the school half term holiday at the end of October, plus I have of course been working on the auction, so all in all it's been a busy time.

Talking of the auction, I think we have another great day to look forward to. At the time of writing, there are still more entry forms to come in, but we should have well over 200 lots, with a great variety of machines on offer. Please do support this event if you can – remember, it only happens once a year! Anyway, more on the centre pages.

And finally, I have a special treat lined-up for you! Stuart Dale has been researching the life of Oliver Whales, and I shall be publishing **The Oliver Whales** story in the magazine next year. I plan to make the January issue a 'special', dedicating the entire magazine to the story, which Stuart has spent four years researching!

I look forward to seeing you all at the auction

All the best

*Jerry*

**Front Cover picture:** a rare Stevenson & Lovett Fireworks allwin, in very nice restored condition – one of the lots entered in the Coventry auction.

# News and Coming Events

## Hastings Pier

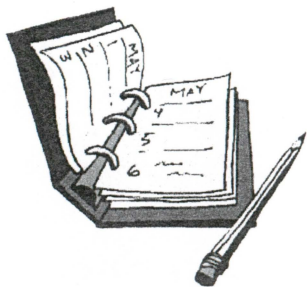
Following the horrendous fire last month, I understand it is still not known when a full assessment of the damage will be completed. However, it is clear that any prospect of full restoration must be in serious doubt. The Hastings Pier & White Rock Trust (HPWRT) is making a plea for donations to fund urgent repairs, as it is feared part of the pier could collapse during the winter months. I presume that it is hoped donations will come largely from local residents and supporters. However, I do wonder just how much local support there is for the pier? The HPWRT website has a forum, which has been running for over a year now. In that time, the forum has attracted only twenty-two members, contributing a total of eleven posts. Hardly enthusiastic!

Whilst I, like so many others, would dearly like to see the pier restored, I do have doubts as to whether it can ever be financially viable. Some of you will remember I operated vintage slots for a brief time on the pier, back in the late '90s; I would never do it again! The pier was struggling then, and I have no doubt it would struggle in the future. The sad fact is, that the pier is in the wrong place, being very much isolated from the main attractions in Hastings. So, in my view, the restoration of the pier (if it ever happens) must go hand in hand with a total redevelopment of Hastings seafront..... and frankly, I can't see that happening.

## Grand Pier

On a brighter note, after a string of setbacks throughout the summer, Weston-Super-Mare's Grand pier has finally reopened at a cost of £39m, following the huge fire there in 2008, which totally destroyed the pavilion. Thousands of people queued for the reopening, which finally took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> October. The reopening was originally scheduled for June, which was then revised to July. It is unfortunate to say the least, that the pier owners have lost out on the entire summer trading, but at least the attraction is now open and can hopefully look forward to a bright future.





## *Dates for your diary*

**MMM Vintage Slot Collectors' Show & Auction** 28<sup>th</sup> November  
Coundon Social Club, Coventry

**Bonhams Mechanical Music & Scientific Instruments Sale** 7<sup>th</sup> December  
Knowle

## **2011**

**Brighton Jukebox Show** 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> April  
Brighton racecourse

**Jukebox Madness** 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> October  
Kempton Park racecourse

Don't forget – if you know of any event which would be of interest to readers of the magazine, please let me know so that I can include details on this page.

# Dreamland

## MARGATE

### Save Dreamland Update November 2010

Despite much hard work behind the scenes, we have not reached any major milestones since my last update for Mechanical Memories Magazine. So I thought I would take this opportunity to tell readers about a really interesting part of the Dreamland project that is rarely written about and seemingly never discussed: the Dreamland archive project, which continues to grow under the directorship of Mandy Wilkins.

A number of Dreamland artefacts have been donated to us, most notably the collection of John Hutchinson, the author of the excellent book 'A Dream Came True', who died a couple of years ago. This includes everything from photographs and newspaper cuttings to Dreamland memorabilia.

Most archives are formed of existing collections and material but in the case of Dreamland, with the exception of the Hutchinson collection, much of the archival material has been lost or wilfully thrown away, the rest being unsorted and uncatalogued. This means that our first task is to find as much information as we can from print sources (newspapers, flyers, photos, publicity brochures etc.) scan them and put onto disc. Alongside this we are recording oral histories of those with relevant and interesting personal memories of Dreamland, which give a unique insight into the Dreamland of the past.

We are making steady progress, although the process is by its nature, slow. Our researcher Suzannah Foad is sifting through back copies of the Isle of Thanet Gazette for mentions of Dreamland and has so far consigned eleven years of these to disc. In addition, Suzannah has been assisting members of the Trust with documentary evidence on a number of subjects.

The oral history element is also progressing, with a number of interviews from members of the public, making for some priceless memories of Dreamland. We are constantly seeking new material, especially in print form or subjects to be interviewed! Please contact [mandy@dreamlandmargate.com](mailto:mandy@dreamlandmargate.com)

We now have a number of volunteers working with us on this project. For the last three months Megan Sutton has been working one day a week in the project office with Audience Development Officer, Jan Leandro. Her area of interest is education, so Megan will now be working with the Dreamland Youth Panel on the Battle of the Bands and other Youth Panel events.

Meanwhile, Suzannah Foad has been researching archival material for the Dreamland Archive Project and Liam Dermott is providing technical support with the recorded oral histories under the guidance of Mandy Wilkins – who incidentally, as with all directors of the Dreamland Trust, is also working voluntarily.

And, of course, there is Kapo, with the Dreamland ice cream cart who has been a passionate ambassador of the project, with his vintage ice cream van seen all over Margate over the summer months. We are also talking to a number of collectors of vintage slot machines about displaying them within the Dreamland amusement park when it opens in 2010.

Finally, I wanted to mention the death of local historian Mick Twyman last month, who was a good friend of the Save Dreamland Campaign and will be sadly missed by all of us. Mick was the founder of the Margate Historical Society and was one of the first people to actively support the Campaign, meeting with me in January 2003 at Margate's Shell Grotto, only days after the Campaign was set up. He supported the Campaign continuously since those early days and supplied information and photographs, some of which are displayed on our website. In 2003, Mick was also the first person to propose the idea of Dreamland being used as a site to display "working funfair heritage"...

### ***Nick Laister***

Chairman, The Dreamland Trust

[www.dreamlandmargate.com](http://www.dreamlandmargate.com)

[www.savedreamland.co.uk](http://www.savedreamland.co.uk)

NEW RELEASE:

# Fairgrounds at War 1939-1945

by Kay Townsend

From the back cover:

"This book charts the life of the showmen in the Second World War, including:

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- **Prize shortage** for the stalls
- **Landmines** destroyed everything
- **Penny arcade** blown to pieces

They still remained open! They had to keep up civilian morale. This is only a fraction of what showmen went through, but still they kept going. How did they survive all this? With information that's never been printed before, this book will tell the young showmen of today what they never knew about the past."

**ISBN Number:** 9780955359538

**Format:** Paperback

**Number of Pages:** 272

**Publication Date:** September 2010

**Publisher:** Kay Townsend

RRP: ~~£19.99~~

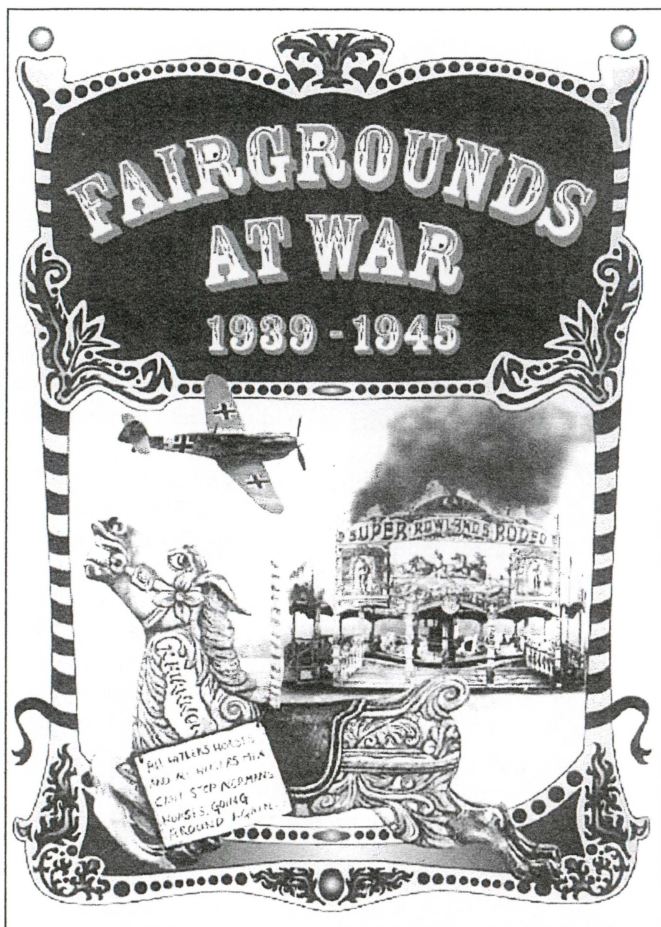
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# Beachcomber

By Robert Rowland

Today's memories take us back to Mablethorpe 1967. Aged twelve, I am really enjoying the six-week school summer holidays. I am in and out of the local arcades all day, having fun playing on some of my favourite slots; machines like Penny Falls, Cake-walk, Cover the Spot, Penny on Ice and Tooty-Fruity (we had two of these back to back in one arcade). All of these machines were fairly common in most seaside arcades around that time, and they all had one thing in common: they were all manufactured by Alfred Crompton, of Ramsgate, Kent.

However, Mr Crompton also made other machines that were not so easy to find, **Beachcomber** being one example. Bingoland in the High Street was the only arcade in town to have one of these. I remember seeing one in Great Yarmouth, plus one in Skegness, but they were few and far between.

The Beachcomber stood just over three feet high, two feet five inches in width, and weighed three-quarters of a hundred weight (this according to the official Cromptons flyer). The machine was very pleasing to the eye; the very scenic backflash showing a desert island surrounded by sea, a galleon sailing ship on the water proudly displaying the Crompton name on its sail. Eight large palm trees on the island itself, a couple of seagulls flying in the sky, and stood on the beach was a large wooden chest, open and full of treasure. Then, above the ship it read 'BEACH COMBER' in large, clear red lettering. Under that, in smaller black lettering 'FILL ANY COLUMN TO WIN.' Those beautiful green palm tree leaves really stood out, they covered much of the backflash. Looking at that scene, it seemed so real.

How did the game work? You inserted a penny in the single coin entry at the very top of the machine, the penny would then drop either left or right and then bounce on the various pins, eventually entering one of the eight columns, where pennies were stacked end on end ready to pay out. When a column was full, the next coin to enter would drop through a hole, releasing the contents of that column. Payouts were 4d, 6d and 8d. The good news was that there was no visible lost – the only money the machine took were the pennies that dropped through the holes to release any full column.

I also liked this game because I could make money on it! I would hang around the machine, waiting for holidaymakers to fill up the middle four sections, as these were the easiest columns to get. To insert one penny and get four back was a good return, and to constantly keep doing this vastly increased my day's spending money. I often noticed that coins rarely entered the end 8d jackpot columns, even though there was just enough room for a coin to go through. Usually, both end columns remained full, thus tempting the player even more. Odd times, I did notice that an end column had been won, so overall this was a very fair slot to play.





Years later, and I now own a Beachcomber. To my surprise, I found a cut-out on the backboard, measuring about six inches wide by three inches high. It cannot be seen from the outside because blue sky and the red Beachcomber lettering hides it. I can tell this hole is not something that has been added, but has always been there. When a penny drops into this hole, it falls to the back of the machine and is lost. As a kid, I do not ever remember there being a 'lost' on this machine.

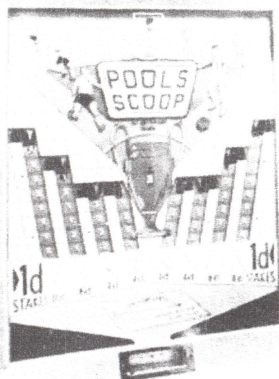
When playing on my machine with this hole open, a high percentage of coins dropped through, making the game a lot less enjoyable. Yet, the words lost or lose do not appear anywhere on the actual backflash. I have covered up this aperture with thin plastic, but am still very curious why this hole is there? So if anyone can shed any light on this, do please let us know, and maybe next months MMM could reveal all!

Cromptons also made three other identical machines: **Pools Scoop**, **Sky Divers** and **Penny Drop**. All housed in the same cabinets, with identical Payouts, but just had different themes. If you want to see my Beachcomber in action, go onto Youtube and type in 'penny arcade Cromptons.' You will see a two minute video clip of this machine in full working order.

*Robert Rowland*

*Left, original Cromptons flyer advertising three essentially identical drop case machines. As Robert mentions in his text, there was a forth, **Sky Divers** – it seems odd that this is not included on the flyer.*





## Penny Drop ▶

Lively, gay and bright playfield. Same play action as 'Pools Scoop'. Columns fill with coins until an extra penny drops through the hole to release 4d, 6d, or 8d to the punter. A real winner. Overall height 37 ins. Width 29 ins. Depth 13 ins. Weight 1 cwt.



## ◀ Pools Scoop

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## ◀ Beachcomber

Another colourful machine that has earned a 'Top-Taking' reputation. The action is similar to the 'Pools Scoop'—the pennies stack into 8 columns ready to payout 4d, 6d, and 8d. This is the big incentive that converts punters to 'Beachcombers'... their rewards are steady—yours are great! Overall height 37 ins. Width 29 ins. Depth 13 ins. Weight 1 cwt.

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# Coventry 2010

*Once again we're all looking forward to the biggest slotties' event in the year. For the benefit of those who will be attending for the first time (and as a reminder to the rest), here are a few points:*

*Entrance is strictly by catalogue only, so order yours now! Each catalogue will include two tickets – extra tickets can be purchased for £3 each. Doors will open at 10.30 am for viewing, so unless you are a vendor, please do not arrive earlier as you will not be admitted. The auction will commence at about mid day, and please note that this is a cash only auction – no cards, cheques, promises, etc. Please also note that we will not be paying in or out until the end of the auction, so if you wish to go early, please do not bid – there will be no exceptions.*

*I think we've got the message across by now, but for the benefit of newbies, there is to be no buying, selling or dealing outside of the auction. We certainly do not want to see unsold auction lots flogged off in the carpark afterwards. Jeremy and I put in an enormous amount of work to put these events together, and we do not believe that it is fair (and most of you agree) that a small minority should try to avoid paying a meagre 6% commission. If anyone attempts to sell you something outside of the auction, please let me know.*

*As usual, we will allow children to attend, but only by prior arrangement. Please use your judgement as to whether this is the right place for your kids, as several hours can seem like days to a bored child. Make no mistake that we will throw out any child that we consider to be a nuisance. We will certainly not admit small children, babies or toddlers. We haven't had any problems in the past, but we will not allow disruptive brats to spoil the enjoyment of others. If you intend to bring children, please call me on 07710 285360.*

**So, we look forward to seeing you all on the 28<sup>th</sup>.  
This is YOUR day, don't miss it. And above all else, ENJOY!**

**Central England**  
**Vintage Coin-op**  
**Collectors' Show and Auction**

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2010**  
**Coundon Social Club, Coventry CV6 1GP**

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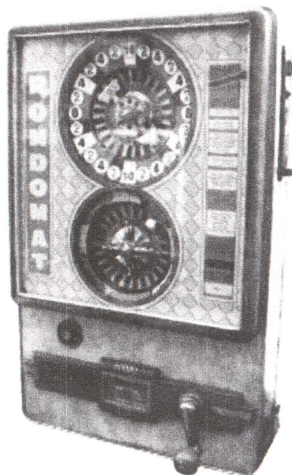
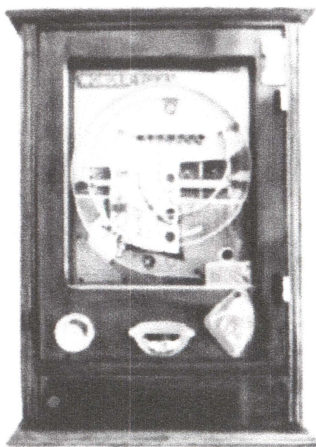
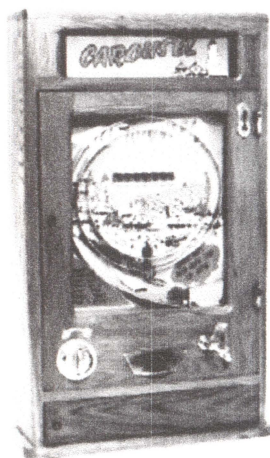


# Coventry 2010 Preview

Well, I think this will be another great day for us all. There are still more entries to come, but so far things are shaping up nicely! Many thanks to the vendors, who as usual have come up with a great selection of lots. It's good to welcome a few new vendors entering lots for the first time, as well as welcoming back the regulars who can always be relied upon. Once again, we have a great selection of machines, with something to suit everyone and every pocket. And for those who like a challenge, there are a good number of projects to keep you occupied over the winter months. There are plenty of interesting non machine lots too, including coins, spares, books, flyers etc.

The selection of allwins includes Saxony machines, a nice French reserve ball with electric shock, Whales, Wonders, R&W, Parkers etc., plus a very nice example of a rare Stevenson & Lovett Fireworks. Other wall machines include a good selection of German mechanical and electro-mechanical machines, Circle Skill, Challenger, Gypsy fortune teller, Cascade etc. Bryans machines include Clocks, Bullion, Pilwin and a rare Tick Tock.

Floor-standing machines include a rare Exhibit Supply Co. Hi-Ball and a choice of three ice hockey tables, including a rare German electro-mechanical six man machine for restoration.



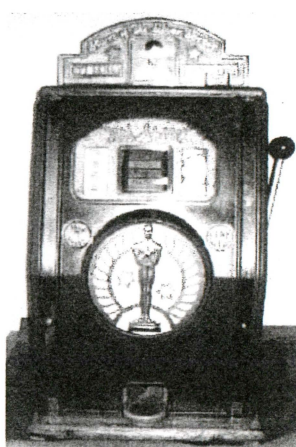
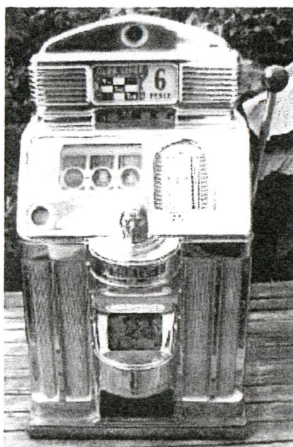
*Parkers Carousel \* Wonders Wonder Pools \* Gunter Wulff Rondomat*



One-armed bandits are not quite so well represented as last year, but then with forty on offer, it was something of a record! Nonetheless, there is a good selection, including the usual Bally, Jubilee, Aristocrat, Sega, Mills etc. At the top end, we have a very nice Jennings Club Chief and an equally nice Pace Fancy Front.

Once again, I shall be posting all the pictures supplied by vendors on my website. Although I have the pictures now, I cannot post them on the site until they have been assigned lot numbers, so please be patient! I am hoping to have the cataloguing finished by week commencing Monday 15<sup>th</sup>, so keep an eye on the site during that week.

[www.mechanicalmemoriesmuseum.co.uk](http://www.mechanicalmemoriesmuseum.co.uk)



*Jubilee Riviera \* Jennings Club Chief \* Boland Stars of the Silver Screen*

# The biggest slotties' event of the year

## Don't miss it!

# How Far Do You Go?

By Richard Brewerton

Collecting is one of the most popular pastimes there is, closely beaten into third place by football and fishing maybe, but still actively pursued by thousands of us. The list of collectibles is endless and somewhere near the bottom you'll find antique slot machines. OK, so not such a crowd pleaser as stamps or cigarette cards, but I know which I prefer. So what gives you the most pleasure from this hobby?

I can appreciate the pleasure that some get from owning a rare original machine that's worth a fortune, but for me, once you've fixed it to the wall and played it a few times, what else? I don't blame anyone for buying and selling machines to build up a collection, it's just that my interests are elsewhere. You see them often on the Antiques Roadshow, with their pottery, furniture, medals and other collections. One chap I saw recently had over three hundred Barbie dolls. Whatever turns you on. For some though, it seems that it is the value of a collection that means as much to them as the items themselves. Sadly, I'm not and probably never will be one of the few who can invest thousands of pounds on a rare machine, but luckily I'm well catered for at the lower end of the market.

What gives me most satisfaction from this hobby is restoring a bit of a wreck into a fully working 'as new' machine, along the way learning how it works, fixing it if it doesn't, and possibly fabricating some simple part to replace a missing item. I do not have much spare time to spend each week, so sometimes a machine may take me months to finish. That doesn't matter though, because along the way it's given me something to do and often something to think about, keeping the old grey matter working. I researched all I could about the theory of one-armed bandits before I bought my first, but learnt a lot more by stripping the thing down and rebuilding it. I've done four now and know I made a bit of a pig's ear with the first and could have done it much easier, but learning as you go is part of the enjoyment.

So how far do you go with a restoration? It worried me to begin with when I tackled my first allwin, a wreck I bought to restore which would educate me at the same time. The case had sadly seen better days and needed repair, but to what extent should I go? Then I realised that on the grand scale of things, my cheap allwin was at the bottom, so it didn't really matter what I did with it. Still, it made me wonder. What is considered patina; what is acceptable wear and tear; what shows that a machine has had a long and busy life in an arcade? Some marks are given a romantic label, "It's given a lot of pleasure." Some marks are caused by a thoughtless idiot leaving his cigarette to burn away on the top of the cabinet. Should I leave these marks, as they illustrate the machine's history?

What looks better, a bandit with shiny chrome-work, or one with a rusty money tray, because it's original? At what point does a machine displaying all the signs of having given a lot of pleasure become a bit of a wreck? This is what puzzles me. If it was an old oil painting, you would be advised to have it cleaned by a professional, then the colours would come back to life and you would see it as the artist did. If it was a classic car you would fit new body panels and renovate the engine. But with furniture, if you take a sander to it, you'll wreck it. I don't know. I think that the deciding factor for me is that it's my machine and it didn't cost a lot, so I can do what I like with it. I don't really want an 'original' looking allwin on the wall complete with wormholes, chips, dents, scratches and fag burns, authentic or not. Nor would I be proud to show off my latest bandit, complete with period rust and cracked glass, where it's previously given someone a lot of pleasure.

No, I'm afraid I fall into the camp that prefers my machines to look as they did when new. To me, that means stripping and re-spraying a bandit to its original colours, or as near as. Re-chroming parts as necessary and restoring artwork on my laptop. With an allwin, I'd rather make a new cabinet than sit and look at one that someone has carved their initials across the front of. I may be wrong, but I don't think they're ever restored; just put back to the way they once were. Having said that, I would probably never buy an expensive machine, as I wouldn't want to touch it and ruin it. My little collection is not really an investment in financial terms, but certainly has been with regards to the pleasure received whilst doing the restorations.

***Richard Brewerton***



**Lineage ads. are free to subscribers and will run for two issues, unless you instruct me otherwise. Please ensure I have your ads. by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month for inclusion in the next month's issue. Remember to include your telephone number and the area where you live. Post or e-mail to the address on page 2**

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### **For Sale**

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### **Wanted**

Jennings Peacock one-armed bandit. Must be in good original condition, on 1d play.

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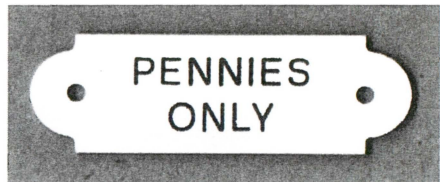
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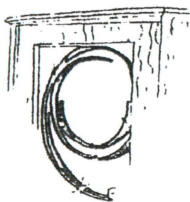
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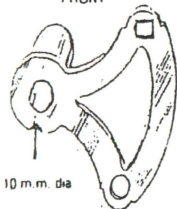


Win Tabs Red printer  
on Silver foil sticky  
backed 12 on a sheet

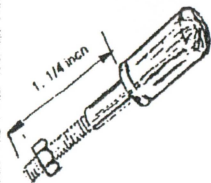


CHROMED 7 ball win  
gallery. 6 x 1.9/16

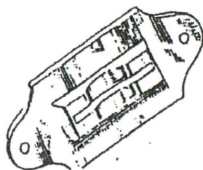
CHROMED TRIGGER  
FRONT



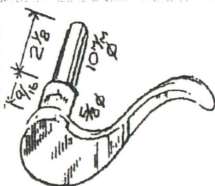
10 mm dia



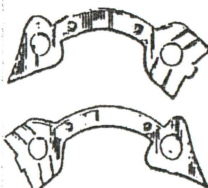
CHROMED THUMB  
STOP



COIN SLOT  
to suit 2p but can  
be filed bigger

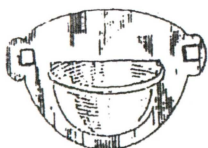


TRIGGER



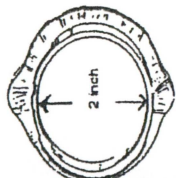
CHROMED ARROWS  
Reversible.

CHROMED PAYOUT BOWL

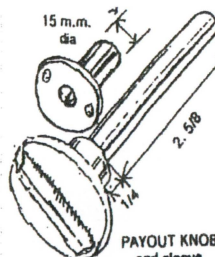


2.5 inch dia cup 2 x 0.25 inch fixing  
squares at 3.75 inch centres.

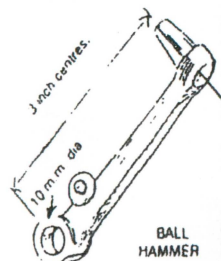
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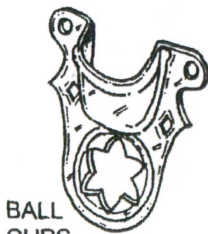


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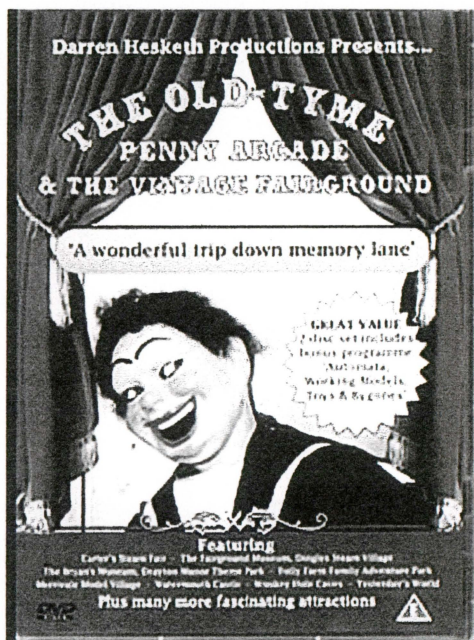
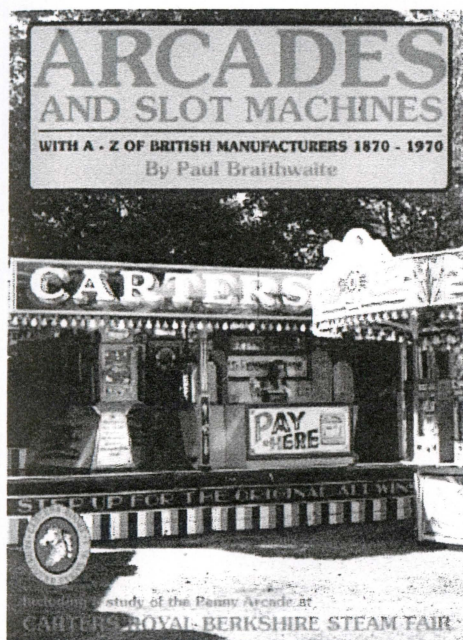


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